

fw



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/894,010	06/29/2001	Robert Schulz	017835-0376	5692

7590 02/26/2003

Glenn Law
FOLEY & LARDNER
Washington Harbour
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20007-5109

EXAMINER

PATEL, NIHIR B

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3743

DATE MAILED: 02/26/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/894,010

Applicant(s)

SCHULZ ET AL.

Examiner

Nihir Patel

Art Unit

3743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-5 and 11-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 6-10, 17 and 18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election of group II (claims 6-10) in Paper No. 5 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claim 18 states that the outer container is in direct communication with the inner container whereas in claim 6 the applicant stated that the outer container is separated by an insulating sleeve.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 6, 17, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujitani Patent No. JA 0076887. Referring to claim 1, Fujitani discloses a vessel for accommodating

Art Unit: 3743

metallic hydrides that comprises two concentric containers, one of the containers hereinafter called inner container 4 (see figures 1b and 1c; constitution lines 2 and 3) being located within the other one which is hereinafter called outer cylinder 1 (see figures 1b and 1c; constitution lines 8 and 9), the containers being separated by an insulating sleeve 8 (see figures 1b and 1c; constitution lines 9 and 10) for maintaining the inner container at low temperature, the inner container being used for storing hydrogen in a liquid form, the outer container being in communication with the inner container and containing a metal hydride 7 (see figures 1b and 1c) for storing hydrogen in a solid form.

It has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

The intended use statements are not given any patentable weight in this instance, for example, "for maintaining the inner container at low temperature".

Referring to claim 17, Fujitani discloses an outer container 1 that is not under vacuum.

Referring to claim 18, Fujitani discloses an outer container 1 that is in direct communication with the inner container.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujitani

Patent No. JA 0076887 in view of Nishizaki et al. US Patent No. 4,457,136.

Art Unit: 3743

Referring to claims 7 and 8, Fujitani discloses the applicant's invention as claimed with the exception of stating the type of hydride used in the outer container.

Nishizaki discloses a metal hydride reactor that does state the different types of hydrides used in the invention. It is obvious to one in the ordinary skill of the art that well known metal hydride like LaNi_5H_6 be applied to a hydride tank of Fujitani that requires a low equilibrium plateau pressure at the operating temperatures of the tank in order for the hydride tank to function at its maximum capacity.

Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujitani Patent No. JA 0076887 in view of Shintaro et al. Hydrogen Energy System Vol. 19, No.2.

Fujitani discloses the applicant's invention as claimed with the exception of stating the type of metal hydride used in the outer container.

Shintaro discloses a hydrogen energy system that does the different type hydrides used in the invention (see page 4 lines 18-20). It is obvious to one in the ordinary skill of the art that well known metal hydride like Ti/Cr be applied to a hydride tank of Fujitani that requires a high equilibrium plateau pressure at the operating temperatures of the tank in order for the hydride tank to function at its maximum capacity.

Art Unit: 3743

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Nihir Patel whose telephone number is (703) 306-3463. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful the examiner supervisor Henry Bennett can be reached at (703) 308-0101.

NP
February 5, 2003



Henry Bennett
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3700